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V9. 2. 33







A BRIEF SKETCH (2)  
OF  
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS  
OF  
M. DE VOLTAIRE,  
WITH AN ACCURATE  
ACCOUNT OF THE LAST MOMENTS OF HIS LIFE.

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"Deists have also done much for toleration and religious liberty. It may be doubted if there be a country in Europe, where that cause has not been advanced by the writings of Voltaire."

W. J. Fox's *Sermon*, London, 1819.

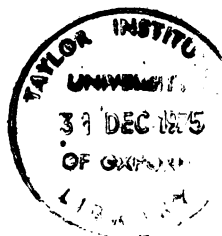
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London :

J. WATSON, 18, COMMERCIAL PLACE,  
CITY ROAD, FINSBURY.

(Near Bunhill Fields Burial Ground.)

V9. D. BR1



A BRIEF SKETCH  
OF THE  
LIFE OF M. DE VOLTAIRE.

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THIS illustrious man was born in the beginning of the year 1694, of respectable parents, his father being a notary at Paris, and afterwards treasurer of *la chambre des comptes*. He acquired the first rudiments of his education from his godfather the Abbé Chateau-neuf, and it may not be unimportant to mention that besides the little fables which are usually taught to children, he knew by heart a very free poem called the *Moisiad*, which is by many supposed to have given the first impulse to that boldness of opinion which distinguished his after life. When ten years old he was sent to the College of *Louis le Grand*, which was kept by the Jesuits, and was one of the first schools in Paris; here his talent soon began to display itself, as likewise his free sentiments, it is even recorded that having offended one of the professors, the latter said to him, "Thou wretch, thou wilt one day carry the standard of Deism into France," an expression rather calculated to flatter the vanity than suppress the spirit of a young philosopher. His affability gained him the friendship of his young companions, while his genius excited their admiration, and it is remarkable that almost all his associates became Deists when children, and remained so to the end of their lives. The fame of his talents reached the ears of the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos, who had always been the friend of his mother, and she desired to see this child of whom she had heard so much. When he was introduced to her she was delighted no less with his genius, than his attained qualities, and bequeathed him by her will two thousand livres to pur-

chase books, the most acceptable legacy to a youth whose sole pleasure was literature.

On leaving college Voltaire was pressed by his father to choose some profession; he preferred the life of a man of letters, but this would not satisfy his father, and he accordingly went to study the law in the schools of jurisprudence, but never turned his legal pursuits to any account; his passion was literature, and he was courted by the first men of the day; princes and noblemen were proud of his company. Even at the early age of seventeen he produced a tragedy, but as this contained no love scenes, (an indispensable requisite to the modern drama,) it was deemed unfit for representation and rejected accordingly. At this period his misfortunes seemed to have commenced, for having written some lampoons against the French Academy, his father threatened to turn him out of doors; and the Marquis de Chateau-neuf being appointed ambassador to the Hague, and having taken Voltaire to Holland to protect him from his father's indignation, was in consequence of an unfortunate amour, obliged to send him back to Paris. The only condition of obtaining his father's forgiveness, was his entering himself with an attorney, which he did, and he there acquired a knowledge of business, which proved serviceable to him in after life. His taste for letters was, nevertheless still predominant; he felt he was out of his element, and left a profession so unsuitable to his disposition. He soon became involved in fresh disasters, for being suspected as the author of some verses against the memory of Louis XIV., who was but just dead, he was confined in the Bastille, where he remained upwards of a year, without pen, ink, or paper. It is the property of a great mind not to succumb to misfortune, and therefore notwithstanding these privations, (the greatest which a literary man could endure,) he formed in his mind the plan of his *Henriade*, an epic poem in praise of Henry IV. of France, and as an instance of his facility in composition it may be mentioned, that no single line of the second Canto, though composed under such inauspicious circumstances was ever altered. The real author of the libel having confessed himself guilty, Voltaire was at length set at liberty, and continued his literary career by altering his tragedy of *Edipus*, though much against his will, to suit the taste of the day; it proved successful, and was performed three months without interruption.

Voltaire did not remain in tranquility—a lampoon appeared



against the regent, and as he was accused, (though falsely,) of being its author, he was exiled from Paris, and this was the more mortifying as the very prince he was charged with satirizing had been his friend and benefactor. He soon reappeared in Paris with a new tragedy, but as his happiness was disturbed by the death of one of his dearest friends, (Monsieur de Genouville,) he left the city, and retired into the country with Madame the Marchioness de Villars, and afterwards went into Holland; on his return from the latter country he met with the poet, Jean Baptiste Rousseau, the author of the *Moisjad*, he however appeared to have turned devotee since the writing of that poem, and the interview between the two authors which had begun with the greatest cordiality, ended with a violent quarrel which lasted for twenty years.

Voltaire returned to Paris, and met with nothing but new disasters; his *Henriade* was pirated, even before he had himself published it, and having contracted a quarrel with the powerful family of the Rohans, he was once more sent to the Bastille. During the six months of his confinement, he studied the English language, and on being liberated, went over to England, where he became intimate with the most celebrated men of the age. It was here that he first published his *Henriade*, which met with the patronage of King George I., and the Princess of Wales. After three years' residence in England, Voltaire again returned to Paris, and by the sale of his poem and two or three successful speculations, found himself possessed of a comfortable fortune, which was so much the more useful to him, as it enabled him the better to maintain his ground against the varied attacks of his intolerant persecutors.

To people of the present day, the illiberality of the age in which Voltaire flourished, will scarcely be conceivable; according to the custom of the Catholics, the ecclesiastics refused to bury Mlle. le Couvreur, a celebrated actress, in consecrated ground, and loaded her name with the utmost contumely; Voltaire, determined to rescue her memory from disgrace, wrote an apotheosis in verse, and even this, which one would have imagined could scarcely have offended the greatest bigots, raised such a commotion that our author was forced to fly from the metropolis, and take shelter in Normandy; it is true he shortly afterwards returned to Paris, but he there again became so obnoxious by various new publications, the most celebrated of which is "The Maid of Orleans,"

that he was once more forced to fly, and retired to Cirey, with Madame du Chatelet, a literary lady, with whom he remained five years. For some time he appeared but little in public, if he attempted to reside in the metropolis, he was soon compelled to return to his country retreat, and even Cirey was at length found insecure for him. The Prince Royal of Prussia, (afterwards Frederick the Great) offered him a shelter from the persecution of his country, but his regard for Madame du Chatelet, prevented him from accepting the offer, and, notwithstanding the dangers to which he was exposed, he preferred remaining at her residence, where he employed himself in studying the philosophy of Newton, and even published a popular treatise on the subject, a fact which at once proves the strength and versatility of his genius.

Voltaire was preparing to return to Paris, when he received a letter from Frederick of Prussia, to inform him of his accession to the throne, and to appoint a meeting with him at Cleves; Voltaire went there accordingly, and was instantly admitted into the confidence of this prince, and engaged in the negotiation of several important state affairs. On the occasion of a war breaking out with Maria Theresa, he returned to France with his celebrated tragedy of *Mahomet*, which was performed at a provincial theatre and subsequently at Paris. The sensation created by this piece was astonishing, it was openly denounced as an offence against religion, ecclesiastics thundered their invectives against it, and one carried his absurdity so far, as to adduce (by way of proving that the play was obnoxious to Christianity,) the fact of the name *Ma-ho-met* containing the same number of syllables as the name *Je-sus Christ*.

The success of his negotiations with Prussia, procured him the favour of Louis XV., of France, and he was appointed a gentleman of the chamber; the life of a courtier poet is but insipid, it consists in writing birth-day odes, and songs in praise of persons for whom we have no esteem, and therefore as this period of Voltaire's career would be uninteresting to the greater part of our readers, we shall pass it over in silence. He was soon disgusted with the French court, and retired to that of Stanislaus, the ex-King of Poland, a prince, who, by the study of philosophy and the belles lettres, consoled himself for his political calamities. Voltaire invited thither his old friend the Marchioness du Chatelet, and passed two years in tranquility, composing some of his

most celebrated works, among which we may enumerate the philosophical romances of "Zadig" a work generally known in this country. The happiness of this retreat was interrupted by the death of Madame du Chatelet, and Voltaire, to dispel his grief went to Paris, where he remained a year, and then once more visited Prussia.


Frederick was delighted to receive him, and offered him all sorts of honours and distinctions, but Voltaire would accept nothing without the consent of the King of France, excepting the key of chamberlain and the cross of merit, which he considered merely as magnificent trifles. He passed his time very pleasantly, his tragedies were privately acted by the royal family (he himself being their director); he conversed with the king every evening on politics and literature, and even corrected the poems of the latter; an employment which frequently offends rather than gratifies, and it is no small trait in Frederick's character, to find him submit to the judgment of a man inferior in rank, though superior in genius.

At length the intrigues of his enemies, who accused him of ridiculing the king behind his back, and above all, the envy of Maupertuis, President of the Academy of Berlin, created a coolness between the prince and the philosopher, and on the appearance of a poem called *Akakia*, of which Frederick disapproved, the latter caused the whole edition to be seized and burnt. Our author, sensible of his worth as a man, was not to be brow-beaten by a king; he resigned the marks of distinction with which Frederick had adorned him, and desired the servant "to take away those disgraceful marks of servitude." An emissary was dispatched to Voltaire, at Berlin, to request an apology, at the same time telling him that in case of a refusal, he was to carry back to the king his answer verbatim; Voltaire, being in a great passion, told him that the king might go to hell, and on the emissary asking him if that was the message he meant to be delivered "Yes," answered Voltaire, "and add to it, that I told you that you might go there with him." Frederick was in reality a good-natured man, and far from being offended by this answer, was so amused by its boldness, that he recalled Voltaire to Potsdam, who, on re-appearing before the king, brought the "*Akakia*" in his hand, and threw it into the fire; Frederick rushed forward, and in spite of the endeavours of the author, saved the book from the flames, at the expense of a pair of

ruffles, and the eccentric scene ended with the king and the philosopher laughing heartily, shaking hands and becoming as great friends as ever.

Nevertheless, this offensive work having been printed in Holland, caused a renewal of the king's coolness towards Voltaire. The situation of the latter became unpleasant, he found the confinement of the court painful to him, and as Paris was now disposed in his favour, he resolved to return to his native land. Frederick gave him permission to retire, but at the same time demanded back the key and ribband. All men are governed by vanity, and those very distinctions which the philosopher had once despised, became of value in his eyes, at the moment he found he was about to lose them. He abandoned the idea of retiring, and merely solicited leave to visit the waters of Plombieres, for the benefit of his health; a request the king readily complied with. Voltaire was hardly out of Frederick's dominions, when he was suspected of being the author of an epigram against the latter, which had just made its appearance, and the indignant sovereign had him apprehended at Frankfort sur le Mein, where he was kept in confinement for a month. At the end of this time he was set at liberty, and Frederick discovering that he had suspected him wrongfully, afterwards became reconciled to him, and even offered him an asylum from his enemies; but experience had taught our author that a royal court was not the natural soil for an independent philosopher, and the offer was accordingly rejected.

Shortly after his departure from Prussia, he settled in his celebrated house in Geneva, which he called "Delices." It was here that he published his celebrated novel of "Candide," a work which still amuses readers of all nations, while it instructs them in lessons of liberality. His fate appears to have kept him in one perpetual state of trouble, for at the very time he was beginning to enjoy the sweets of retirement, his enemies were working his destruction. Manuscripts of the "Maid of Orleans," containing seditious verses against the party then in power, were circulated about, and as these were found incapable of doing him any serious mischief, his persecutors stimulated against him all the bigotted pastors of Geneva, who raised the outcry against him, and were assisted by the working classes of people, who were then sunk into the lowest depths of superstition. At this period flourished Rousseau, one of the most celebrated writers that ever existed.



He had adopted a singular opinion, that the use of reason is only a degraded state of man, and that his best and happiest condition is a state of nature, and far superior to the boasted state of *civilised man*. Voltaire received from the author the speech in which this paradoxical theory was inculcated, and sent him in reply a very flattering letter, which stated that he was so much convinced of the truth of the doctrine, that he was almost tempted to walk on all-fours. Rousseau was of a disposition not at all inclined to raillery, he took great offence at this pleasantry of Voltaire's, and became his determined enemy—he carried his theory farther than ever, he declaimed openly against sciences, arts, literature, and philosophy, and said the human species was only destined to inhabit woods and forests. Voltaire was quite ignorant of the dislike which Rousseau had conceived against him, and when the latter was threatened with persecution, for having written his “*Emile*,” he offered him a house as an asylum, and told him he might there philosophize at his ease. Rousseau replied to him in these few words, “I do not like you, sir, because you corrupt my republic by your plays.” This concise epistle made Voltaire imagine that its author was a little deranged, and he accordingly said, “It is not advice which Rousseau requires, but water gruel.” The republic which was so dear to the author of “*Emile*,” did not turn out very grateful, but on the contrary ordered the book to be burnt, and himself to be taken into custody, and it is worthy of remark that the very persons who were *corrupted* by Voltaire's plays, were not found among the number of his persecutors, and even Voltaire took some pains to stop their illiberal measures.

At his own seat, he amused himself with satirizing those of his enemies who had been so active in persecuting him; and at this period when he distinguished himself by his wit, he signalized himself by a noble trait of humanity. Mlle. Corneille, the grand-daughter of the celebrated French tragedian, being at Paris in a state of utter destitution, Voltaire kindly received her into his house, where she was educated under the care of his niece, and raised a subscription for her benefit. He was at that time building a church, and a country-seat, but notwithstanding these disbursements, he said, “that an old soldier of the great Corneille, ought to be of service to the grand-daughter of his general.” Religious enthusiasm is the legitimate parent of persecution, and the

Genevrese pastors were all in arms against Voltaire, for having censured Calvin, the founder of their community. Rousseau, though himself a free thinker, was almost as great an enemy as the clergy; he declaimed against plays, and in short, all rational amusements whatever. It was no longer safe to remain within the territory of this illiberal republic, and our author therefore left "*Delices*," and went to reside at the Castle of Ferney, situated within the French dominions.

Voltaire was now about sixty-six years of age, yet his activity and vigour remained unaltered; his abode was the house of call for men of all countries, all were anxious to see a philosopher who had spent a long life in combating the hurtful prejudices which had been revered for centuries. His liberality to his guests was exceedingly great; and strange to say, he built a splendid church at his own expense; but we conceive more in contempt than reverence for such buildings.

About this period, the parliament of Toulouse condemned an old merchant, called Calas, to die upon the wheel; he was a Protestant, and this is supposed to have been his real offence, though to give a legal colour to their proceedings; he was accused of having murdered his own son. Madame Calas and Pierre, another son having been banished after the execution of the venerable head of their family, came to Geneva, and were introduced to Voltaire. He examined into the facts of the case, and discovered that old Calas had died perfectly innocent, and he accordingly wrote a detail of the whole circumstances of the supposed infanticide, and submitted it to the public, who were thereby rendered more disposed to hear the truth, and less affected by prejudice than before. The way being thus paved, he sent Madame Calas to Paris, to implore mercy of the king. She surrendered herself prisoner, and the very arrêt which had condemned her husband to the wheel, and thrown an innocent family into ruin and disgrace, was at length solemnly annulled. The widow came from her imprisonment in triumph, surrounded by a vast concourse of people, who shed tears of compassion for the misfortunes she had undergone, and blessed the name of our beneficent philosopher, and afterwards, at his instigation, most of the crowned heads of Europe joined in repairing the misfortunes of this unfortunate family, and restored them, as far as possible, to their former happiness.

During the time Calas's affair was in agitation, Voltaire published the "Philosophical Dictionary," one of the most pleasant, instructive, and amusing books ever written. The opinions which it inculcates are not exactly orthodox, but there is a rich vein of humour and irony sustained throughout the whole, that many readers will admire its merit, who do not admire its principles. This work, as might be expected, did not much please the clergy, and they accused it of being hostile to the Christian religion, an opinion in which we must certainly coincide, for never were the dogmas and narrations of the modern European theology held up in a more ridiculous light.

The death of Calas was still in every body's mouth, when the religious world, ever insatiable of blood, disgraced themselves by a fresh atrocity. A number of young men, assembled at a private drinking party, were foolish enough to blend irreligion\* with debauchery. Being in a state of intoxication, they sang several irreligious songs, and committed sundry delinquencies of a like nature; which were rather to be attributed to the thoughtlessness of youth, and the excitement of the moment, than considered as any serious misdemeanour. A prosecution was commenced against them, some absconded, the Chevalier de la Barre, one of the number, was condemned to be burnt, and this fearful sentence was put in execution. The arrêt which ordered the execution of this unfortunate young man, at the same time condemned the Philosophical Dictionary to the flames, because this work being found among the criminal's effects, was supposed (erroneously enough) to have caused the commission of the fatal crime. It may be worth noticing, that a work of a very obscene nature was also found in the young officer's library: this was *not* condemned to be burnt; for religionists, though they persecute most unremittingly, works written on liberal principles, regard with a comparatively lenient eye, offences against morality. It is supposed that if it could have been formally proved that Voltaire was the author of the "Dictionary," he would have been burnt as well as the Chevalier, but we rejoice to say this never took place. Our author defended by his writings the memory of the unfortunate De la Barre; and, never idle, continued in every species of composition, to inculcate liberal opinions. Tales, novels, allegories, plays, reasoning, and ridicule, all appeared

\* This irreligion consisted in mutilating a statue of the Virgin Mary.

directed to the same useful end. He was now advanced in years, yet his troubles had not drawn to a close. He had offended the Bishop of Annecy, and this prelate was determined to inflict his vengeance upon him, and he certainly must have been much in want of a cause, for the pretext he made use of, seems too irrational, even for a bigot. Voltaire, as lord of the manor, availing himself of a custom then obsolete, but not wholly annulled, made a speech to his tenants, at Ferney, in the church which he had himself built. His discourse was nothing but an inculcation of honesty and other moral virtues, but yet quite sufficient to offend the bishop. He regarded it as an infringement on the rights of the priesthood, and all Versailles was filled with his complaints; but notwithstanding, no proceedings were taken against Voltaire.

Our author at length triumphed over all his opponents, and the French literati proposed to erect a statue to his honour. A subscription was soon started, and a rule was made, that no foreigner should enrol themselves in the list of subscribers; an exception, was, however, made in favour of Frederick, King of Prussia, and he was proud of being among the number of those who paid honour to so distinguished a philosopher. Before the statue could be inaugurated in public, the literati assembled at the house of Maidemoiselle Clairon, a young lady, who had formerly being an actress, and who was held in much esteem with men of letters. They ranged themselves in a circle, in a hall prepared for the ceremony. The young lady herself, being dressed as a priestess of Apollo, and bearing a laurel wreath in her hand, rehearsed an ode in honour of Voltaire, and the whole assembly, including the fair orator, burst into tears when she hinted at the time when a man so beloved would be taken from them.

We have now followed the venerable philosopher beyond his seventieth year, and were we to record the numerous acts of benevolence which he performed, even at this advanced period of his life, we should exceed the limits prescribed by a work like this. When he had passed his eightieth year, he suddenly reappeared in Paris, and was greeted with the respect of all. The celebrated Dr. Franklin happened to be there at the time, with his grandson. He called on our author, and said to the boy "Fall down on your knees before that great man;" and Voltaire, placing his aged hand on the boy's head, pronounced these characteristic words, "God and Liberty!"



The last memorable time in which Voltaire appeared in public, was when he visited the theatre, to witness the performance of one of his own tragedies, he occupied the chief box, and at his entrance all the audience rose up to pay him the homage he so well deserved, indeed they could not restrain themselves from frequently interrupting the actors with cries of "Long live Voltaire," "Long live the defender of the Calas's!" After the tragedy the curtain rose, and a bust of Voltaire was discovered standing in the middle of the stage. The performers stood around, each bearing a laurel in their hand, they walked by the bust in succession, and successively crowned it with their wreaths, while the spectators at each inauguration, cried "this is the gift of the public." When he returned from the theatre multitudes flocked round his coach, and accompanying him home, made the air resound with their acclamations.

The agitation of mind produced by this excessive homage, and the labour he took in assisting the Academicians to compile a Dictionary, are supposed to have accelerated his death. He had long been deprived of sleep, and a dose of opium was administered to him, which augmented instead of remedying his disorder.

We will here insert a letter from one of his physicians—with the remarks that accompany it, taken from the preface to Sir T. C. Morgan's "Philosophy of Morals," page 27, and which will at once demolish the innumerable lies, promulgated by the religious world concerning the death of this celebrated philosopher.

*(Translation of Dr. Burard's Letter.)*

"I feel happy in having it in my power, by rendering homage to truth, to overthrow the lying accounts that have been spread abroad with regard to the last moments of Voltaire. I was by my profession one of those who were appointed to mark the progress of his disease, (along with Doctors Tronchin Lorry, and Try, his physicians); I did not quit him a single instant during his last moments, and I can certify that we always observed in him the same strength of character, although in consequence of his disorder, he must have experienced extreme suffering. We had absolutely prohibited him to speak, in order that he might avoid the progress of a spitting of blood with which he was afflicted—yet even then he continued constantly to communicate with

us by means of cards, on which he wrote his questions: to these our answers were verbally given, and if we did not give him satisfaction, he still continued his observations in writing. He preserved therefore his intellects to the last moment, and the foolish stories which have been published, merit the greatest contempt.

It cannot even be said that any person has related this or that circumstance of his death, as having been an actual witness; for towards his end, all access to his chamber was absolutely denied to any person whatever. Those who came to inquire the state of his health, remained in the anti-chamber or other apartments. The discourse which has been put into the mouth of Marshal Richelieu, must therefore be as counterfeited as the rest.

Signed, BURARD, Physician.

*Paris, April 3, 1819.*

This statement of Dr. Burard was confirmed to me in all its particulars by Madam la Marquise de Villette, Voltaire's adopted daughter, who was likewise about his person during his last moments. The origin of such stories as those here refuted, is easy to comprehend. If true, they prove only that a man, worn out by disease, has not the same force of character as when in the plenitude of health. But true or false, they are perfectly suited to the mental *calibre* of gossiping bigots, who measure humanity in all its aspects by the standard of their own impertinent imbecility; and who arrive at the pleasure of a strong sensation, through a strain upon their limited imaginations, to which they could never attain through their still more limited understanding."

Thus ended the life of a man, whom even his enemies allow to have been one of the most extraordinary and universal geniuses that ever lived; he wrote in every species of composition, and in all he excelled. No man in the short space allotted to human life, contributed more to the amusement and instruction of mankind, and none more ardently combatted the prejudices of the age in which he lived.

We copy the following extracts from the preface to Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary*, illustrative of that great man's labours:

"It is scarcely necessary to advert to the horrible instances of Calas, and the poor youth, the Chevalier de la Barre, in which Voltaire directly interfered, and the recital of which harrows up the soul of shuddering humanity. These, with other misjudgments and persecutions, as decided, if not so excessive, formed part of the every-day practice of obscure tribunals, the proceedings of which Voltaire—and ever honoured be his memory for it—dragged into open day. Was it not enough that a priesthood, enormous in power, in wealth, and in influence, formed an eternal guard over the bigots who perpetrated these cruelties, and opposed like a Macedonian phalanx, every enlargement of mind or of practice, of tolerance, or of liberality, to sanction the war of philosophy against it? Talk of the enmity of philosophy to religion! What was that in France which was called religion, but, as at present in Spain, a monster in deadly enmity to every species of social and political improvement, which it opposed in all forms and at every avenue? To love mankind, and to endeavour to lower its plethora and extract its teeth and its nails, amount to the same thing. The struggle was between mighty elements, and happily the lever employed by philosophy was, temporarily at least, the strongest. "Happily" may be said equally by the man of devotion and by the sceptic; by the latter without reserve, and by the former on the very soundest religious principle—that until such an anti-Christian fabric was either removed or reformed, nothing in the asserted spirit of the founder of Christianity could possibly be established."

"The philosopher has certainly not gained all he looked for; but neither *have* priestcraft and superstition, and what is better, neither *can* they ever recover the ground they have lost in the great country of France."

"It is no nice estimation of the mode of attack and of the nature of the weapon—no casuistical refinement upon the exact point when discretion failed, when the argument was carried too far, and when the assailant ought to have paused,—which can rob Voltaire of the honest fame of having broken down, and *for ever*, the most baleful order of domination that ever existed, and that by the arms of wit, reason, and adven-

trous exposure alone. It must be something more than a few light-minded and fantastical inconsistencies, which can erase the name of this man from the list of the benefactors to mankind."—

"But great as are his claims on this score, they by no means form his only title to the gratitude of his fellow-creatures. It is trite to observe, that books are useful in proportion as they are read; and that the most able and elaborate productions, if only partially perused, must be comparatively inefficient. The elegant and perspicuous style in which Voltaire conveyed his various information, the fascinating brilliancy of his allusion, the piquant attraction of his wit, and the easy flow of his narrative, made readers of every body; and such is the spontaneous and natural order of his thoughts, that his prose is less injured by translation than that of any other author on record. Such have been the operation of these charms, it would be difficult to say how much his contemporaries and posterity owe to the labours of Voltaire; for, setting aside his diligent and never-neglected exposure of superstition and priestcraft, and their historical train of horrors, he uniformly inculcates the finest lessons of humanity, and those improved views of the genuine nature of the social progress which are now happily established beyond the power of the Holy Alliance to unsettle, if not to impede. It is asserted, to be sure, and may be allowed that the works of Voltaire, to which we more particularly allude, convey no great depth of information, upon points of mere erudition and closely-elaborate research. So much the better for his purpose, for in that case they would not have moved the general mind, which was his useful and beneficial object. It must never be forgotten, that he wrote for every body; and it would be immensely useful if other able men would do the same."

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